

HERITAGE COLLEGE & SEMINARY

INTERVIEW GUIDE



THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

While the goal of the cover letter and resume is to help you obtain an interview, the goal of the interview is to secure a new job. The interview is where you will “sell yourself” as the perfect candidate for the role and make your resume come alive.

There are several important steps you can take throughout the interview process that will help you succeed in your endeavor.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Preparing for an interview is an important, but often missed step in the interview process. Despite the fact that the one hour you will be with the employer will likely determine if you receive the position, there is still time that can be put in beforehand to ensure that you present yourself in the best way possible.

Below are some steps you can take before the interview to ensure you are prepared.

1. Know the job description **very well** going into the interview.
 - Have several examples of ways you have used the skills that are in the job description.
2. Research the organization/company.
 - Know its values, Mission, and Statement of Faith (if applicable).
3. Look over common questions that are asked in interviews and practice your answers (see page 4).
4. Prepare some questions in advance to ask the interviewer(s).
 - Having questions for the employer(s) shows that you have done your research and indicates your interest in their organization and the position.
 - Try to avoid questions that can be easily answered on their website – this shows that you did not do your research.

Below are some practical tips to consider as you head to your interview:

1. Interview attire: Research how employees dress in the industry you are applying to and then try to go **one step beyond that**.
2. Arrive 10 minutes early. Showing up exactly on time is late.
3. Bring a few extra copies of your resume.
4. Bring a pen and notepad if you want to take notes.
5. Turn your phone off or make sure it's on silent.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

1. The Elevator Pitch

- The first 30 seconds of an interview are very important, as they set the stage for the rest of the interview and give the employer a first impression of you.
- “Can you tell us about yourself?” is a common introductory question. The response to this question is known as your Elevator Pitch. It is called this because it should be brief enough for you to share during an elevator ride. Generally, this is a summary of your skills and qualifications that make you a great candidate for the position. It is usually not supposed to include personal information.
- **However**, if you are applying for a ministry job or to a Christian organization, there is usually more interest in your personal/family life – especially if it is a pastoral role – so you may want to include some of this type of information.
- Use your discretion to decide what information to share based on the employer/company.

2. Be prepared for the “Tell me about a time when...” questions.

- This is known as a Behavioural Interview—the employer is seeking to learn more about you through your responses to different situations.

- When asked a question of this nature, you should respond using the STAR method:
 - **S** – Situation. Set the context of the story. What was happening?
 - **T** – Task. Share the part you played. What was your role or responsibility in this situation?
 - **A** – Action. Share what happened and what needed to be done. What did you do and how?
 - **R** – Result. State the outcome. What was the conclusion to and impact of the situation?
 - The STAR method should help you effectively and succinctly share your experiences with the employer.
3. Be aware of nervous habits/fidgeting.
 - This could be playing with hair, cracking knuckles, tapping your pencil, shaking your leg, etc.
 4. Show enthusiasm about the role.
 - The employer wants someone who is excited about the position. Even if you are nervous, ensure that you come across as enthusiastic and interested.
 5. Do not speak negatively about your previous or current boss/job, even if the employer or hiring team asks.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

1. Send thank you notes/messages to the interviewer(s) afterward – within a day.
 - This is a great way to remind the employers of the discussion they had with you and shows them that you value them and their company. You can send one to each interviewer if possible, or if there was a group, you can address it to the “hiring team”.
2. You may choose to follow up with the employer after a certain time – depending on their communication with you at the close of the interview and timeline for letting you know their decision.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below are some interview questions that are very common and that you are likely to be asked. To prepare for your interview, practice answering these questions and variations of these questions.

1. Tell us about yourself.
2. What is your biggest weakness?
3. What are your greatest strengths?
4. What is your biggest/greatest achievement?
5. Why do you want to work for us?
6. How would your previous bosses/coworkers describe you?
7. Why should we hire you?
8. How do you cope with stress?
9. How do you handle conflict?
10. What about this position interests you?
11. Tell us about a time that you handled a difficult situation at work.
12. Give an example of a time when you worked well under pressure.
13. Tell us about a time when you exhibited leadership qualities.
14. How did you become a Christian and how have you grown spiritually since?

What do you believe about God, the Bible, and the Gospel?

NEXT STEPS

The more you practice, the more confident, comfortable, and natural you will come across. Take some time to go through the practice questions and answer them aloud. Ask a friend to ask you the questions and offer feedback on your responses and demeanor.